

## COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

**Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) Advisory Council (CAC) held at 9.30 A.M on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at New Delhi, India.**

### **The following were present:**

Prof. Asha Kanwar  
President and CEO  
Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Chairperson

Dr.K.Balasubramanian  
Vice President,  
Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

Dr.Vijitha Nanayakkara  
University of Peradeniya  
Sri Lanka Member

Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali  
Vice Chancellor  
Open University of Malaysia  
Jalan Tun Ismail  
50480, Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia Member

Mr.S.P.Goyal  
Joint Secretary  
Technology enabled Learning  
Department of Higher Education  
Ministry Of Human Resource Development  
Government of India, New Delhi  
India Member

Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam Khan  
Secretary (Retd)  
Ministry of Higher Education  
Government of Bangladesh  
Bangladesh Member

Ms. Aminath Namza  
Head, Foreign Relations  
Ministry of Education  
Male 20096  
Maldives Member

Prof.Vinod Pavarala  
UNESCO Chair on Community Media (India)  
Department of Communication Member

University of Hyderabad  
Gachibowli, Hyderabad  
Telengana- 500 046

Prof. Madhu Parhar  
STRIDE

Member

Indira Gandhi National Open University  
Maidan Garhi  
New Delhi, 110 068  
India

Dr. Ramesh Chander Sharma,  
Director, CEMCA  
New Delhi

Member

Mr. R.Thyagarajan  
Head, Admin. & Finance  
CEMCA  
New Delhi.

Secretary

Apologies:

Prof.Mansoor Akbar Kundi, Executive Director, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad,  
Government of Pakistan.

### **Item No. 1: Chairperson's introductory remarks**

Prof. Asha Kanwar welcomed the new members and appreciated the contributions made by the members whose term has expired. Prof Kanwar thanked all representatives from the Asian Member states for their continued financial and intellectual contributions. She pointed out that this meeting provides an opportunity to review the progress of CEMCA during 2014-2015 and to suggest ways and means for effecting further improvements within the context of Commonwealth of Learning's new Six Year Plan 2015-2021 entitled 'Learning for Sustainable Development'.

She informed members that the two external evaluations (three-year Outcome Evaluation and nine Year Impact Evaluation) found that the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) had emerged as an outcome and impact-oriented organization. The strapline of COL's new Strategic Plan 'Learning for Sustainable Development' aligned COL with Goal 4 of the new Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the international community and would focus on using appropriate technologies for promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and training. She stressed that COL would focus on two key areas; education and skills development while gender will be cross cutting all activities. The approaches of COL have attracted the attention of development agencies and generated additional funding, from the Governments of Canada and Australia for skill development for girls and women in four countries, i.e. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Tanzania.

Prof Kanwar briefed members about COL's various presentations at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and how its technology innovations were 'adding global value'; the theme of this year's CHOGM. She suggested that CEMCA focus on three things going forward: i) provide expertise and advice in Massive Open Online Courses; Quality

Assurance; Accreditation and Open Education Resources (OER); ii) promote skills development at scale using blended approaches and iii) build on previous work in Community Radio. She observed that CEMCA had been reaching countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Malaysia in addition to India and must continue to focus on its regional remit.

After concluding her introductory remarks, she requested the members to introduce themselves as some of them were attending the meeting for the first time.

She then asked Dr. K. Balasubramanian, Vice President to say a few words before taking up the agenda items for a detailed discussion.

Bala noted that the last five years had been very interesting as MOOCs and OER had evolved to a great extent particularly in Western countries and he felt that the ODL institutions had yet to adapt to these new developments. For developing countries, it was imperative to domesticate the new technologies for effecting innovation in ODL. He stressed that COL and CEMCA should show the pathways through which education and learning could lead to sustainable development.

**Item No. 2: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> CAC meeting held on September 16, 2014.**

Prof.Asha proposed that the minutes could be confirmed as CEMCA has incorporated the comments received from members and requested the response from members. Prof.Anuwar Ali and Prof.Vinod Pavarala seconded that the minutes reflect the deliberations correctly and hence could be confirmed. The minutes of the Fourteenth meeting were confirmed unanimously.

**Item No. 3: Action taken on the decisions in the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Mr. R.Thyagarajan presented the “Action Taken” Report:

**1. Strengthening virtual open schooling through working with all stake holders.**

Developed a strategy framework for e-Content for the use in Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) and assisted in conversion of courses for the VOS.

**2. Develop more industrial linked programme at secondary level**

Developed two industry linked courses such as “Sound Technician” along with 10 videos for NIOS and “Nursing Assistance and Geriatric Care Assistance” for JSS Karnataka Open School, Mysore, India were developed.

**3. Continue the work on ICT integrated teacher education and community of practice**

Organised four workshops on ICT integrated teacher education for DIET faculties of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and organised a Regional Consultative meeting on Teacher Education using ODL in Asia.

**4. Institutionalize OER based eLearning programme for professional development of teachers.**

Assisted Wawasan Open University, Malaysia, Open University of Sri Lanka and Uttarakhand Open University to launch OER based eLearning programmes.

**5. Organise Information and Communication Technology Leadership in Higher Education event in Bangladesh**

Organised a workshop on ICT leadership in higher education in Bangladesh for Vice Chancellors of Universities in Commonwealth Asia.

**6. Promote a community radio technology course and support more curricula for skills development**

The Certificate for Community Radio Technician programme was launched in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Open University and Uttarakhand Open University. Twelve new curricula for skills development have been developed for Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. Helped Krishna Kant Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati and Netaji Subhas Open University for upgradation of vocational courses in tune with NSQF.

**7. Further strengthening of the community radio sector in India and Bangladesh.**

In order to encourage the youth of India and Bangladesh to engage with community radio and motivate them to understand the importance of self-expression, learning and development of local communities CEMCA organised Community Radio Video Challenge contest in India on the theme “Community Radio: Citizens ‘Voices, Empowering Societies” in collaboration with UNESCO. There were thirty-six entries from the students of Indian Media schools. This contest was replicated in Bangladesh in association with Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC). Promoted content exchange for Bangladesh of the CLPs through IPDC project. Collaborated with Sri Lanka for organising a workshop on Web Radio in which 20 educators were trained. A National level consultation on Community Media was organised at Male in partnership with Maldives Broadcasting Commission and at Sri Lanka in association with Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum and Ministry of Mass Media. CR CIT was translated in Hindi and Bangla for reaching a wider population.

**8. Ensure achievement of CEMCA three year plans 2012-15 and analyse the evaluation reports on higher education and community media.**

External evaluation on the Higher Education was conducted by Educational Technology and Management Academy (ETMA), New Delhi. The evaluators observed that the capability of the ODL institutions has to be assessed by conducting a survey especially with reference to the programmes on OER based eLearning, ICT integration in ODL and Quality Assurance in ODL in general and OER in particular. Involving ODL experts from the countries in the region should be on the basis of their capabilities, programmes and accomplishments to create an ecosystem of ‘growing together’- a better alternative for sporadic innovations and quality management.

An external evaluation on the Community Media activities carried out during 2012-2015 was conducted by Mr. Ashish Sen. The recommendations of the evaluator are:

1. CEMCA's Community Media Three year Plan, the findings, indicates its resonance with all stakeholders. They warrant continued support.
2. CEMCA's TYP, notwithstanding its critical relevance for the sector, also encompasses themes and practises which are new for the sector in South Asia. In this context there would appear to be a need to review the current timeline and consider a longer period.
3. While CEMCA's TYP activities have effectively promoted and increased women's participation, fluency and skills through community radio/media, the findings indicate that issues of equity and inclusion remain, there would appear to be more women producers, volunteers and anchors as opposed to engineers. It would be useful for CEMCA to undertake a survey in this regard determining the roles and responsibilities of women broadcasters in community radio stations.
4. There is a need to improve both Project and Process documentation.

The report appreciated the efforts of CEMCA in achieving collaboration with University of Peradeniya and AMARC.

#### **Item No. 4 and 5: CEMCA Annual Report 2014-15 and CEMCA Activity Plan 2015-16**

Dr. Ramesh Sharma presented the Annual Report for the year 2014-15 and presented CEMCA's 2015-16 plan. He noted the range of activities in CEMCA's initiatives (Open Schooling, Teacher Education, Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Skill Development, Community Media) and the progress achieved.

The salient issues covered in his presentation were:

- Sensitisation of institutional leaders about the importance of deployment of technology.
- Upgrading the skill based programmes to the prescribed National Skills Qualification Framework.
- Android based mobile application "CR Tech Quiz" for self-assessment of technical knowledge.
- Carrying out of additional funding projects of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- Progress of research Project Open Educational for Development, sponsored by International Development research Centre.

There were 36 workshops/events, excluding the cascade training workshops held at different Community Radio Stations. The participants were from India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. A detailed report was released and this is now posted on CEMCA website.

He noted that CEMCA will focus on the following during 2015-16:

- i. Leadership in digital innovations
  - ii. Skills based educational initiatives
  - iii. Promoting OER
1. Open Schooling: CEMCA will give priority for capacity building in development of eContent. Development of training resources for supporting online learners will be undertaken. Efforts would be made for transforming the courses for digital delivery.
  2. Teacher Education: CEMCA will promote “Community of Practice” Platform. Educational mobile app development for teacher education curriculum will be completed. Besides capacity development of teacher educators of special education will be given special preference. The capacity of special education teachers in ICT integrated teaching learning would be enhanced. Apart from the above, CEMCA would plan a Regional consultation on developing ICT integrated teaching learning resources for special teacher educators.
  3. Higher Education:  
  
CEMCA would develop/ review national and institutional policy on OER/ODL. National consultation on OER and National capacity building on OER would be achieved. Capacity building of distance teachers on tutoring and assessment in supporting distance learners would be carried out.
  4. Technical and Vocational Skill Development(TVSD):  
  
Development of OER based resources on TVSD would be completed. Capacity building activities in regard to implementation National Skills Qualification Framework in distance Teaching Institutions would be conducted.  
  
Hands on training on developing OER for Vocational teachers would be completed. In order to cover wider spectrum of teachers a Regional consultation on flexible and blended learning courses for TVSD would be organised.
  5. Technology Enabled Learning (TEL):  
  
Development and implementation of ICT applications would be thrust area under TEL. CEMCA would develop a new pedagogical model to enhance learning (CEMCA AugmenLearn). A study on status of eLearning in Commonwealth Asia would be conducted. Further, CEMCA would attempt a development of a MOOC for Vocational teachers on developing digital skills. :

6. The OER policy development:

CEMCA will continue to associate with Government of India and other interested countries to adopt OER policies.

7. Gender:

All activities of CEMCA have gender considerations, and special efforts are made to increase participation of women in every activity. Awards and scholarships will continue to be offered to best women students. Community women broadcaster training would further support the empowerment of women in local communities.

8. Knowledge Management:

Publication of CEMCA Newsletter would be continued. CEMCA would focus on strengthening its website with new features and social network options.

9. Additional contribution:

The IDRC supported two-year research project on OER is progressing well. Its results will be available next year. Further CEMCA will carry out the expected assignment from Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. Expression of interest has been submitted to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for organising Community Radio Awareness workshops and National Sammelan of CR stations.

Thereafter Prof.Asha Kanwar invited the members to express their views on the activities that were carried out during 2014-2015 and its plan for the first year, i.e. 2015-2016 of Six-year plan for the period 2015-2021.

During the discussions, members appreciated the work done by CEMCA and offered the following suggestions.

**Prof.Vinod Pavarala:**

The toolkit developed by CEMCA for Community Radio has already been translated in Hindi and Bangla and he was happy for his association with CEMCA in this activity.

This toolkit, originally developed for India with support of CEMCA has now been validated and adapted for use by community radio stations in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Taking note of CEMCA's efforts at initiating discussions on community radio policies in Maldives and Sri Lanka, Prof. Pavarala suggested that such efforts would bear better and more sustained results if CEMCA could collaborate with well-known multilateral agencies as such as UNESCO that have a lot of experience in media policy advocacy.

Prof Pavarala wondered why CEMCA wanted to support a Diploma in Community Media programme of IGNOU as the earlier intervention of supporting a Certificate programme in CR Management had proved unsuccessful.

CEMCA supports in bringing out Community Radio News by UNESCO Chair. He further said that CR News is widely appreciated.

He believed that conducting CR Awareness workshops and a National Sammelan on CR would not yield any meaningful results.

He also pointed out that many of the activities of CEMCA are in the nature of “onetime events”. He cautioned that without an appropriate “project framework”, such events may not lead to fruitful results. He suggested that CEMCA work more closely with UNESCO.

Prof. Asha Kanwar responded that COL has developed a joint work-plan with UNESCO and often works in a complementary manner. For instance, UNESCO developed a high-level competency framework for teacher ICT integration (CFT) and COL has developed the resources to support the achievement of the three competencies identifies in this framework.

**Mr.S.P.Goyal:**

Mr. Goyal felt that a perspective plan with clear linkages to outcomes and impacts is missing.

He thanked CEMCA for organizing, a Meet of Vice Chancellors of State Open Universities to discuss OER.

The regulatory framework prevailing in other countries on Research being carried out by Open Learning Institutions may be made available to Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) for review as this could help in strengthening research activities with programmes such as Ph.D. A rigorous quality framework should be adopted by ODL institutions so that Ph.D programme offered by them will stand comparable to those offered by conventional Universities.

The regulatory framework prevailing in other countries in regard to offering Technical programmes, such as engineering, would also be very useful for MHRD, Government of India.

**Mr.Md.Nazrul Islam Khan:**

Bangladesh also faces a similar problem in respect of Ph.D programmes offered by ODL institutions. Assessment of students should be done through technology and for that we should have effective question banks.

**Dr.K.Balasubramanian:**

OUSL is offering Ph.D in Agriculture and Irrigation. CEMCA should come out with best practices which could convince the policy makers in India and Bangladesh. He pointed out that the developing countries are leaning towards the supply side rather than focusing on the demand for relevant education and suggested that CEMCA should address this issue.

**Prof.Madhu Parhar:**

CEMCA should conduct an ABC analysis so that it could choose the countries, activities and strategy as per the need expressed by a specific country. As the needs of the countries differ, the strategy should be carefully chosen according to the ABC analysis.

OER is still at an initial stage in India and collaboration with MHRD is required.

**Prof. Anuwar Ali:**

Expressed surprise that the Ph.D programmes offered through ODL were not recognised. In Malaysia every institution is encouraged to offer Ph.D programmes. In fact the quality of research through ODL institutions was considered good.

**Dr. Vijitha Nanayakkara:**

OUSL is offering engineering programmes, health science programmes which are all lab oriented. Science kits are supplied in OUSL along with the study material. He agreed with Dr. Bala that as in Australia, medical students should have access to labs for practical.

**Conclusion**

Prof. Asha Kanwar thanked the members for sparing their valuable time and participating actively in the deliberations. She promised that CEMCA would develop a perspective plan with clear linkages to outcome and impact and move away from an “event management” approach. She agreed that CEMCA should focus on strengthening the research aspect in ODL institutions particularly in Bangladesh and India.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and to the members.

**Action items**

**Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, New Delhi.**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action item</b>
1.	Undertaking capacity building of ODL teacher educators for integrating ICT.
2.	Brining out Community of platform for teachers for adoption of best practices.
3.	Building capacity of special teacher educators.
4.	Popularising the OER among ODL institution and different Governments.

5.	Assisting MHRD, GOI in evolving regulatory framework for PhD for ODL institutions.
6.	Implementation of National Skills Qualification Frame in ODL Institutions and Directorates of Distance Education..
7.	Monitoring and Evaluation activity to assess the impact of activities.